

## GRADING

### MARKING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(Bulletin No. M-23 Rev., August 23, 1999)

- A. The Board of Education has the authority to adopt rules and regulations governing a marking system. The Principal has the responsibility for implementing Board policy.
- B. Because marks reflect students' individual achievement toward the standards and objectives of the course, at the beginning of each school year, all classroom teachers are to provide students and parents copies of the course description and objectives contained in the revised Secondary *Guidelines for Instruction*, and the *ESL Course Outlines*, which specify the standards to be met for each course and/or each grade level, and a copy of the "Criteria for Marks".
- C. The classroom teacher shall determine the mark given to each student in the class based upon the "Criteria for Marks"; and in absence of clerical or mechanical mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence, that mark shall be final.
- D. The determination as to whether mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency exists in relation to an achievement mark should be made by the school principal or designated administrator.
- E. Subject achievement marks should reflect a variety of class assignments that measure performance on District Learning Standards. Along with classroom assignments, students must complete one required District developed *standards-based performance assignment* in Grades 6 and 8 for each subject area of language arts and math beginning in the spring of 2000. A *performance assignment* is a uniform task provided by the District that measures a student's performance of the state/district standards. The assignment is based upon what students should be able to produce as a result of a unit of study and is to be scored using the District criteria/rubric. *Performance assignments* will be implemented for history/social science and science courses beginning in the spring of 2001. Student grades on *performance assignments* will be incorporated into their semester/year-end mark. Marking techniques may include daily/weekly entries for oral, written, and other class activities. These marks, as others, must be uniformly administered and recorded.
- F. For every course, a minimum of one achievement mark for each five-class hours of instruction is to be recorded in the Roll Book for each student. *Performance assignment* marks must be recorded once each year in designated grade levels.
- G. Classroom, homework, and other written assignments, i.e. *performance assignments* that count toward a subject mark should be graded, recorded, and returned to students within a reasonable time. (The criteria for determining "reasonable time" might include students receiving evaluation of their work prior to final assessment and/or final mark.)
- H. Meaningful homework relates to classwork and the objectives of the course, emphasizes quality rather than quantity, and should be reflected in the subject mark.
- I. Marking practices which place major emphasis only upon specific test results may minimize the value of daily classroom instruction, at least insofar as that instruction is reflected in a mark. However, any such test must be aligned with the standards of the course.
- J. A disproportionate number of Fails or D's for any reporting period or for a single assignment should be an immediate signal to assess and consider revising the instructional program. Revisions may include reteaching of specific concepts and

skills, individualization of instruction, and varying strategies and techniques to meet the needs of students with different learning modalities.

- K. A systematic process will be established that will be used by all schools in the District to identify students experiencing difficulty achieving grade-level standards for promotion. Parents and students will be informed of concerns regarding student progress as early as possible but no later than the intervals corresponding to progress-reporting periods.
- L. Teachers should send parents positive notes regarding exceptional student performance and student improvement in addition to the regularly scheduled required reports. The District form, *Complimentary Report to Parents*, may be used.

## **RELATIONSHIP OF ATTENDANCE TO MARKING**

- A. Attendance, work habits, and cooperation may not be used as a part of any rigid formula for assigning subject marks, e.g., a set number of tardies or absences may not result in the automatic lowering of a subject mark or loss of class credit. However, daily classroom activities are customarily the most vital and significant aspect of the instructional program; therefore, significant absences as well as habitual and prolonged tardies may result in an absence of learning and a corresponding reduction in the mark assigned.

Work that can reasonably be made up should be made up within reasonable time constraints. Frequently, classroom activities, laboratory investigations, and oral examinations will be work that, when marked, cannot reasonably be made up. Daily marks that cannot reasonably be made up, e.g. classroom activities, laboratory investigations, and oral examinations, can readily and easily significantly lower a student's overall mark.

- B. A reduction of semester credits because of absences is not permitted.
- C. Students with excused absences shall be afforded the opportunity to complete missed classwork and tests or other appropriate or equivalent assignments which can reasonably be provided.
- D. Students absent for justifiable personal reasons, upon written request of the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or designated representatives, shall be allowed to complete assignments and tests missed during the absence which can be reasonably provided and completed.

The principal or his administrative designee will consult with the teacher before the final determination is made on whether or not the personal reason is justifiable. The teacher shall determine what assignments the student shall make up and in what period of time the student shall complete such assignments. The tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments which the student missed during the absence.

- E. Students who have been suspended from a class may be required to complete assignments and tests missed during the suspension which can reasonably be provided and completed. The teacher shall determine what assignments are to be made up and in what period of time the student must complete such assignments. The tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments which the student missed during the suspension.
- F. Students who are truant or absent without verified justifiable personal reasons or students who have returned to school without a note need not be afforded the opportunity to complete classroom work and tests missed. However, in the interest of helping these students, such opportunities may be provided by the teacher.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR NOTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE FAILURE**

- A. CALIFORNIA EDUCATION CODE, Section 49067, requires each pupil's achievement to be evaluated for each marking period and requires a conference with, or written report to, the parent or guardian whenever it becomes evident that the pupil is in danger of failing a course. The refusal of the parent or guardian to attend the conference or respond to the written report shall not preclude failing the pupil at the end of the marking period.
- B. Teachers have the responsibility to communicate with parents whenever student achievement is not commensurate with content standards identified for each course. Whenever a student is not meeting the standards of the course and/or there exists the possibility of failure, the parent or guardian must be notified when students are at risk of not meeting grade-level standards for promotion in or more of the following ways:
1. Marking a "Fail" in the subject area on the fifth or fifteenth week in traditional calendar schools, or the equivalent for year-round school, is considered sufficient notification for issuing a "Fail" on the midterm or final report. A mark of "D" on the fifth or fifteenth week marking report is not adequate warning of failure to the parent or guardian. However, a "D" on the report with the written comment "In danger of failing," can be considered adequate notification to the parent or guardian.
  2. A "Special Report to Parents-Unsatisfactory" issued prior to the marking period as identified above is considered sufficient notification to the parent or guardian. This special report should be issued with sufficient time for the student to demonstrate progress and improvement.
- C. Work habits and cooperation marks are closely tied to the achievement marks; therefore, teachers should notify the parent of a decline in these marks or the possibility of an unsatisfactory mark. The same procedures described above for notification of possible failure should be followed for a decline in work habits and/or cooperation marks.
- D. Without assistance from the parent or guardian, it is often impossible to prevent failure. In addition to the above requirements of notification of possible failure, the teacher is encouraged to hold a conference with the parent or guardian as soon as it becomes apparent that the student would profit from additional help at home or intervention at the school site.

## **PARTICIPANTS IN GIFTED AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

- A. Evaluating progress of secondary students in Gifted Programs.

In general, an "A" or "B" mark is considered to be the usual mark for students identified gifted who are highly able learners. These students generally perform two years or more above grade level and receive such marks when they are performing beyond their age-grade peers and beyond the District standards for a designated grade. Please note that students are identified gifted in various categories; therefore, individual performance assessments are necessary.

Students not maintaining an "A" or "B" should receive teacher assistance, i.e. practice in understanding the rubrics for assignments and assessment and instruction in content area and skill gaps. Intervention measures should be planned with the student and/or parents as necessary. Special counseling and notification of parent and/or guardian is recommended.

The final grade:

1. Must fairly reflect the composite strength of the student using the work of an average student or grade level standard as a benchmark. Punitive grading practices should be avoided.
2. Must contain fair mark value for enhanced, modified learning beyond the regular program.
3. Must yield a satisfactory ranking of the gifted student among his age-grade peers who do not participate in more advanced, fast paced, modified curriculum.

B. Evaluating Progress of Secondary Students with Disabilities

Teachers must consider the individual needs of students with disabilities as described in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) when evaluating student performance. All teachers of students with disabilities, including teachers in general education shall implement the accommodations or modification for instruction, assessment, and/or evaluation written in the IEP. Before grading students with disabilities, teachers should consider whether the accommodations and/or modification in the IEPs have been provided throughout the period of instruction in the subject area/course.

It is expected that most students with disabilities will be held to the same grade-level standards as their nondisabled peers. The IEP team will make this determination based upon assessments of the students' skills and abilities. If students with disabilities are held to differentiated standards, then a grade of Fail in a subject area/course must not be directly due to the impact of their disabilities. Schools should refer to District IEP guidelines for further clarification for IEP teams.

In order to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 which requires parents of students with disabilities to be regularly informed as often as parents of nondisabled peers of their child's progress toward (IEP) goals.